

IN THE CLAIMS

For the convenience of the Examiner, all pending claims of the present Application are shown below in numerical order whether or not an amendment has been made and applying the revised amendment practice of 37 CFR 1.121.

1. **(Currently Amended)** An apparatus for network management in a heterogeneous environment, comprising:

a relational interface adapted to receive a relational query from a software application requesting **network** management information from a specified ~~information source~~ **network device**;

a relational mapper adapted to translate the relational query received through the relational interface from the software application, to native protocol messages according to an access protocol associated with the ~~information source~~ **network device**; and

a protocol transaction handler adapted to handle the native protocol messages as a transaction with the ~~information source~~ **network device**, and return a result of the transaction to the software application.

2. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the relational mapper includes a relational model of the ~~information source~~ **network device**.

3. **(Original)** The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the relational mapper is adapted to translate a query to plural messages corresponding to plural access protocols.

4. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the relational mapper is expandable to receive queries directed to additional ~~information sources~~ **network devices** which use other protocols different from said access protocol, transparent to said software application.

5. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the collection of information of the ~~information source~~ **network device** is viewed as a relational database.

6. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the relational query is independent of management and/or access protocols.

7. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the translation of the relational query to native protocol messages is an abstraction transparent to said software application.

8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein a form of the relational query does not depend on the access protocol to which the relational query is to be translated.

9. (Currently Amended) A relational ~~modeller~~ modeler apparatus adapted to translate a relational query from a software application requesting network management information from a specified ~~information-source~~ network device, to native protocol messages according to an access protocol associated with the ~~information-source~~ network device, wherein said native protocol messages is handled as a transaction with the ~~information-source~~ network device.

10. (Currently Amended) A computer data signal embodied in a transmission medium, for network management in a heterogeneous environment, comprising:

a first segment including relational interface code to receive a relational query from a software application requesting network management information from a specified ~~information-source~~ network device;

a second segment including relational mapper code to translate the relational query received from the software application, to native protocol messages according to an access protocol associated with the ~~information-source~~ network device; and

a third segment including protocol transaction handler code to handle the native protocol messages as a transaction with the ~~information-source~~ network device, and return a result of the transaction to the software application.

11. (Currently Amended) A method for network management in a heterogeneous environment, comprising:

receiving a relational query from a software application requesting network management information from a specified ~~information source~~ network device;

translating the relational query received from the software application, to native protocol messages according to an access protocol associated with the ~~information source~~ network device; and

handling the native protocol messages as a transaction with the ~~information source~~ network device and returning a result of the transaction to the software application.

12. (Original) A computer system, comprising:

a processor; and

a program storage device readable by the computer system, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the processor to perform the method claimed in claim 11.

13. (Original) A program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform the method claimed in claim 11.

14. (Original) A computer data signal transmitted in one or more segments in a transmission medium which embodies instructions executable by a computer to perform the method claimed in claim 11.